

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE**  
**April 8 - 14, 2011**

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**1. [Obama Security Advisor Holds Productive Middle East Talks \(04-14-2011\)](#)**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. National Security Advisor Tom Donilon held “positive and productive” talks with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in a two-day visit to the Middle East, National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor said April 13.

Donilon met with Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud in Riyadh April 12 and discussed a broad range of strategic interests, Vietor said, that encompassed political, economic and security issues. Defense Secretary Robert Gates met with King Abdullah April 6 in his third trip to the region in the past month.

“The discussions highlighted the importance of the U.S.-Saudi partnership rooted in strong historical ties and shared interests,” Vietor said in a statement.

Donilon commended the Gulf Cooperation Council’s efforts to bring about a peaceful transfer of power in Yemen, Vietor said, where the government has been facing significant protests. The Gulf Cooperation Council members are the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

Donilon met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, April 13 for a wide-ranging discussion, which included common strategic interests in the region and the ongoing broad partnership with the United States, Vietor said.

“They also discussed the United Arab Emirates’ important role as a member of the coalition enforcing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 in Libya,” Vietor said. The Security Council resolution calls for the Muammar Qadhafi regime to cease hostilities against the Libyan people, to permit humanitarian assistance from the international community for those areas of the country that have been under attack by government forces, and to recognize basic human rights for the Libyan people.

“Mr. Donilon conveyed an invitation from President Obama for the crown prince to meet in Washington later this month, which the crown prince accepted,” Vietor said.

Vietor also said that during both meetings Donilon and the Middle Eastern leaders agreed that frequent consultations between the countries are essential.

President Obama was scheduled to meet with Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani of Qatar at the White House April 14. The emir had separate meetings with Vice President Biden and members of the U.S. Congress on April 13.

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## **2. U.S. Inspectors Begin Verifying Reduction of Russian Nuclear Arms (04-14-2011)**

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — A team of U.S. inspectors has arrived in Russia as part of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which reduces and limits the nuclear arsenals of both countries. The treaty calls for on-site inspections in order to verify that the world’s two largest nuclear powers are complying with the terms of the agreement.

According to an April 13 media note issued by the State Department, the U.S. team arrived earlier that day for their first on-site inspection in Russia. The treaty was ratified on February 6, and under its terms both sides were authorized to start conducting inspections on each other’s nuclear facilities beginning April 6.

“On-site inspections, along with data exchanges and notifications regarding strategic systems and facilities subject to New START, are key components of a verification regime for compliance with the Treaty,” the note said.

New START effectively reduces the level of warheads each nation possesses to its lowest point in more than 50 years. U.S. nuclear forces will continue to be based on the triad of delivery systems — land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and strategic long-range bombers. But the treaty provides an upper boundary of 1,550 deployed warheads for each nation, and up to 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs or heavy bombers. Additionally, the treaty would permit up to 800 deployed and nondeployed missile and submarine launchers or heavy bombers.

According to a report from the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), the treaty gives the United States and Russia seven years to reduce forces, remains in force for 10 years from

ratification, and contains detailed definitions and counting rules that will help the parties calculate the number of warheads that count under the treaty limits.

Ahead of the treaty's 2010 ratification by the U.S. Senate, Rose Gottemoeller, the State Department's assistant secretary for arms control, verification and compliance, said the verification process in New START is essential to give meaning to the agreement and accomplish its goals of reducing strategic nuclear weapons.

"These treaties are very stabilizing because we view that as long as they understand what we're up to and vice versa, there is no opportunity for miscalculation," Gottemoeller said, adding that the verification process also keeps both nations from spending more money on nuclear weapons when they are not needed.

According to a February 5 State Department fact sheet, New START permits Russia and the United States to conduct 18 on-site inspections per year, starting 60 days after the treaty has entered into force.

Of those 18 inspections, 10 are for sites that have both deployed and nondeployed strategic offensive arms on delivery vehicles such as aircraft, missiles and submarines.

"Permitted inspection activities include confirming the accuracy of declared data on deployed and non-deployed strategic offensive arms, the number of warheads located on designated deployed ICBMs and deployed SLBMs, and confirming the number of nuclear armaments declared to be on designated deployed heavy bombers," the fact sheet says.

The remaining eight inspections focus on sites with nondeployed strategic offensive arms. They can also involve "confirming the conversion or elimination of strategic offensive arms, and confirming that certain facilities have been eliminated," according to the fact sheet.

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### **3. Clinton: U.S., China Building Enduring Relationship (04-13-2011)**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Americans and Chinese talking to one another — listening and learning — is critical to building enduring relations between the two nations, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

Clinton and Chinese State Councilor Liu Yandong co-chaired the second annual U.S.-China High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange in Washington April 11–12. The exchange program, inaugurated in Beijing on May 25, 2010, is held annually alternating between China and the United States.

"We want to see robust, open exchanges, and to lay a firm foundation for cultural and educational understanding," [Clinton said April 12](#). "We think that creating the environment in which people pursue their own dreams, hopes and aspirations will lead to not only greater understanding, but increasing cooperation and partnership between our two countries."

President Obama and President Hu Jintao decided during talks in Beijing in November 2009 that the relationship could be strengthened through people-to-people engagement and cultural exchanges. Out of those discussions came the people-to-people exchange program.

The consultation promotes ties between the United States and China in education, culture, science and technology, sports, and women's issues. This year's program included significant U.S. private sector participation, the State Department said.

"We are very grateful that we now have this opportunity to enhance mutual understanding between the American and Chinese people by increasing direct ties between our people not in a time of war, but in a time of peace and hope," Clinton said during the closing discussions in the State Department's ornate Benjamin Franklin Room.

"We're greatly encouraged by the progress we have made," State Councilor Liu said. "Thanks to this mechanism, the people of our two countries, in particular the students of elementary schools, high schools and universities, have been able to feel the charm of diverse cultures of our two countries and experience the joy of getting to know and understand each other."

Clinton said more Americans are studying in China than in any other foreign country. And the goal is to send 100,000 American students to China over the next four years in a program known as the "100,000 Strong Initiative." That initiative receives approximately \$3.25 million in private sector support from among some of the largest corporations in the United States.

The United States announced that it is broadening the U.S.-China Fulbright Program that has already brought more than 3,000 American and Chinese graduate students and scholars to study, teach and research in each other's countries. China has announced additional funding for 10,000 scholarships for Americans to travel to China for study.

"This is in addition to the 10,000 bridge scholarships that the Chinese government offered last year, and we are touched by this strong signal of support," Clinton said.

During the two days of meetings, a new Young Scientist Forum was created to connect young scientists in science and technology. The forum is designed to explore ways to promote interaction between U.S. and Chinese researchers, focusing on how science programs are conducted, research integrity, scientific responsibility and the peer-review process. The meetings also looked at ways to enhance public understanding of the role of science in everyday society.

In cultural areas, a Youth Outreach program is being launched in 2012 by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to connect young Chinese audiences outside major urban areas with performing and visual arts programs. Other programs focus on cultural forums, information sharing for museums and libraries, and encouraging U.S. private sector organizations to share the best of U.S. culture and society with Chinese audiences.

In sports, the United States and China are conducting exchange programs for coaches, physical education teachers and athletes to visit the United States for clinics and to attend exhibition games, cultural events and community service activities. U.S. sports experts are being sent to China to conduct clinics and programs for Chinese athletes and coaches.

Clinton and Liu announced the launch of the U.S.-China Women's Leadership Exchange and Dialogue, called Women-LEAD. It will be managed jointly by the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues and the All-China Women's Federation.

“Through Women-LEAD, the United States and China will seek to increase dialogue between high-level Chinese and American women leaders and to expand exchanges between organizations, think tanks and universities on gender equality,” the State Department said in a fact sheet on the program. Its primary goals are to promote the sharing of expertise on developing women’s leadership across all sectors, and to provide programs for emerging women leaders.

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#### **4. United States Welcomes EU Sanctions on Iran (04-13-2011)**

By Charlene Porter  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration welcomes the latest step by the international community to pressure Iran on its abusive human rights practices. The European Union voted April 11 to impose visa bans and asset freezes on 32 designated individuals linked to the abusive practices.

“These designations are an important reminder to Iran that the international community will continue to hold accountable those responsible for abuses against the Iranian people,” [according to a statement](#) by White House press secretary Jay Carney April 12.

On the sidelines of the EU meeting, British Foreign Secretary William Hague told reporters the sanctions are being imposed on persons “we believe are responsible and instrumental in these policies.” So far, the names of the 32 have not been disclosed. The EU also noted a recent “deterioration” in human rights practices in Iran as world attention has focused on the battles for greater freedoms being waged in other authoritarian states in North Africa and the Middle East.

Carney pledged an ongoing commitment from the United States to hold Iran accountable. “We will continue to work closely with the EU and other like-minded partners to ensure that the cause of human rights remains at the forefront of our efforts in support of the Iranian people.”

The EU action comes just days after the U.S. State Department released its annual survey of human rights practices in countries around the world. [The section on Iran](#), available on the department’s website, cites a wide range of abuses.

“The government severely limited citizens’ right to peacefully change their government through free and fair elections, and it continued a campaign of postelection violence and intimidation,” the report says. “The government committed extrajudicial killings and executed persons for criminal convictions as juveniles and through unfair trials, sometimes in group executions. Security forces under the government’s control committed acts of politically motivated violence and repression, including torture, beatings and rape.”

The United States imposed sanctions against eight Iranian individuals in September 2010 in connection with the 2009 elections in Iran.

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## **5. Clinton Says Cease-Fire in Libya Is Essential (04-11-2011)**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says that a cease-fire in Libya between government military forces and opposition forces is essential.

“We want to see the Libyan regime forces pull back from the areas that they have forcibly entered,” Clinton said April 11 at a joint press conference. “We want to see a resumption of water, electricity and other services to cities that have been brutalized” by the forces of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

“We want to see humanitarian assistance reach the people of Libya. These terms are non-negotiable,” Clinton said.

An African Union peace mission led by South African President Jacob Zuma was in the Libyan capital of Tripoli April 10 to meet with the Qadhafi government, and was scheduled to meet with opposition leaders in Benghazi April 11. Clinton said the United States was awaiting a full briefing from the AU delegation on what was achieved and what the opposing sides would agree to support in the two-month-old civil strife.

Clinton told reporters that in addition to the other conditions — a cease-fire, a return of basic services for citizens, and humanitarian assistance — the United States believes that “there needs to be a transition that reflects the will of the Libyan people and the departure of Qadhafi from power and from Libya.”

The world has watched as the Qadhafi regime has responded to the aspirations of the Libyan people with continued violence, she said. She offered thanks for the international community’s response with a combination of military action approved by the U.N. Security Council and political, diplomatic and humanitarian assistance.

At the joint press briefing in Washington, Finish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb told reporters that Finland was one of the first countries to condemn Qadhafi, and also the first country to propose sanctions adopted by the Security Council. “After that, we were quite rapid in putting forward the humanitarian aid side of things,” Stubb said.

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## **6. U.S. Urges Calm in Côte d’Ivoire Following Gbagbo’s Capture (04-11-2011)**

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says the detention of Côte d’Ivoire’s former president, Laurent Gbagbo, is a victory for “the democratic will of the Ivoirian people,” who now have an opportunity to reclaim their country’s future as a democratic and peaceful state under their elected president, Alassane Ouattara.

“The hard work of reconciliation and rebuilding must begin now,” Obama said in an April 11 statement. “President Ouattara will need to govern on behalf of all the people of Côte d’Ivoire, including those who did not vote for him,” and all of the country’s militia groups “should lay down

their weapons and recognize an inclusive military that protects all citizens under the authority of President Ouattara.”

Obama commended the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) as well as military personnel from France who took action under the authority of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1975 to protect Ivoirian civilians during the fighting between forces loyal to Gbagbo and Ouattara.

Gbagbo’s capture ends a political crisis that began after he refused to hand over power to Ouattara, who had won the country’s presidential election in November 2010. The four-month standoff since then has devastated the country’s economy, created a humanitarian crisis and refugee situation that threaten the stability of neighboring countries, and led to the deaths of hundreds of Ivoirian citizens.

“Today, the people of Cote d’Ivoire have the chance to begin to reclaim their country, solidify their democracy, and rebuild a vibrant economy that taps the extraordinary potential of the Ivoirian people,” Obama said, adding that a democratic Cote d’Ivoire that is respectful of the rights of its people “will always have a friend in the United States of America.”

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Gbagbo’s detention “sends a strong signal to dictators and tyrants throughout the region and around the world. They may not disregard the voice of their own people in free and fair elections, and there will be consequences for those who cling to power.”

Speaking with Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb April 11, Clinton called for calm in the country following the news that Gbagbo is now in Ouattara’s custody, and urged the Ivoirian people to “contribute to building a peaceful future for their country.”

“Now the hard work begins,” Clinton said, and the United States looks forward to “working with President Ouattara as he implements his plan for reconciliation, economic development and recovery.”

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice said in an April 11 statement that the people of Côte d’Ivoire deserve peace, democracy and a government that “recognizes their fundamental human rights and respects their will.”

They also deserve a return to “the path of prosperity and security,” she said, adding that the opportunity “begins today.”

She said the United States will stand with the people of Côte d’Ivoire and help them to recover and rebuild, while also supporting United Nations efforts to provide peacekeeping and humanitarian work in the country.

Rice also said the Obama administration is “profoundly concerned” about human rights abuses and condemns “persistent violations” that have occurred against civilians during the political crisis.

She expressed support for President Ouattara’s “affirmation of the need to investigate those who have perpetrated attacks.”

“All parties should be aware that the actions of their supporters will be scrutinized, alleged human rights abuses and attacks against civilians will be investigated, and perpetrators will be held accountable without regard to which side they may have been aligned,” she said.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said April 11 that the United States believes Gbagbo should be held accountable for his actions and urged a peaceful transition in the country.

“Côte d’Ivoire has now turned a corner. They’ve got a way forward. They have a president who is elected and now is the time for calm and transition,” he said.

With the end of Gbagbo’s reign, President Ouattara can finally assume the power he won through the November elections and “become the rightful president of Côte d’Ivoire,” Toner said.

“He has a reconciliation plan. He’s got a plan for the future of Côte d’Ivoire that we believe is a good one, and frankly it’s satisfying to see that the Ivoirian people can now finally have a peaceful democratic transition that has escaped them thus far,” he said.

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## **7. Human Rights Report Cites Troubling Trends (04-08-2011)**

By Jane A. Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington — In releasing an annual report on human rights worldwide April 8, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said that the struggle for basic human rights begins by telling the truth, over and over again.

Clinton told reporters during a special briefing that the annual report “represents a year of sustained truth telling by one of the largest organizations documenting human rights conditions in the world: the United States State Department.” The annual report — entitled Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 — is prepared for Congress.

This year’s report examines the legal status of human rights in more than 194 countries and territories around the world. Several troubling trends have been noted, Clinton said. The first is that of repressive governments restricting the ability of members of civil society to organize and operate.

According to the report, more than 90 governments, in the last several years, have sought to pass restrictive laws and regulations that would hamper the ability of organizations to register, operate freely or receive foreign funding. Nonetheless, there has been “explosive growth” of nongovernmental advocacy organizations around the world — even in countries where activists face great personal risk from repressive governments, the report says.

“Fifty years ago, when Amnesty International was created, few countries outside North America or Western Europe had any locally based human rights organizations,” the report says. “Today, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) exist in almost every country in the world.”

“For countries to progress toward truly democratic governance, they need free and vibrant civil societies that can help governments understand and meet the needs of their people,” [Clinton said at the press briefing](#).

Clinton has repeatedly emphasized the importance of civil society in building strong democracies and broad-based economic prosperity. “Societies move forward when the citizens that make up these groups are empowered to transform common interests into common actions that serve the common good,” she said in a major speech to the Community of Democracies last year. But when

governments crack down on the right of citizens to work together, she said, “societies fall into stagnation and decay.”

Another troubling trend cited in the report on human rights in 2010 is the increasing number of repressive governments attempting to curtail access to the Internet and other new communications outlets.

“More than 40 governments are now using a combination of regulatory restrictions, technical controls on access to the Internet, and technologies designed to repress speech and infringe on the personal privacy of those who use these rapidly evolving technologies,” the report says.

Modern connective technologies, the report states, are important in gathering and sharing information on human rights with a broad audience. “Today there are more than two billion people with Internet access spread across most countries of the world, and around five billion mobile phone subscriptions. These numbers are projected to grow dramatically in the next 15 years,” the report says.

A third negative trend, according to the report, is the continuing escalation of violence, persecution and official and societal discrimination against members of vulnerable groups. These “vulnerable groups” include women, children, persons with disabilities, lesbians and gays, and members of racial, religious or ethnic minorities.

Exploitation of laborers was also a problem in many countries, often compounded by threats against workers for attempting to unionize.

The U.S. Department of State is required by law to provide Congress with a complete report regarding the status of internationally recognized human rights for countries that receive assistance and countries that are members of the United Nations. The report provides extensive information that often informs U.S. policymaking.

But the report is also an invaluable reference tool for other governments, international institutions, NGOs, human rights activists and journalists. [The report is translated into more than 50 languages and made available online by the State Department.](#)

“We hope that this report will give comfort to the activists, will shine a spotlight on the abuses and convince those in government that there are other and better ways,” Clinton said at the April 8 press briefing. “And we want to see progress.”

“We started doing this report 35 years ago,” she said, “because we believed that progress is possible. And certainly, if you were to do a chart from 35 years ago to today, you would see a lot of progress in a lot of places. But at the same time, we must remain vigilant, and this report is one of the tools we use to be that way.”

To help with global understanding of the human rights issues, a new website is now available that consolidates human rights information from across all U.S. agencies.

Clinton announced HumanRights.gov (<http://www.humanrights.gov/>) on April 8 during the press briefing on the release of Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010.

The purpose of the new website, she said, is to make it easier for people everywhere to access important information on human rights.

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HumanRights.gov is “searchable and safe,” Clinton said — safe in that anyone can look at it and there is no need to register to use it. “We hope this will make it easier for citizens, scholars, NGOs to find the information they need to hold governments accountable,” she added.

[2010 Human Rights Report: Slovakia](#)

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